smooth green slopes are in reality interlaced thickets of fern, breast or shoulder high, which cover treacherous lava-rock, razor sharp or pot-holed.

It has not always been so. The fringe of cultivated land is now a battlefield where the farmer must do perpetual strife with lantana and other weeds, and it is these weeds that have knit the river-valleys so inextricably. Yet but a few years ago Tahiti must have seemed to have escaped the curse of Eden after the Fall. There were no weeds. It seems incredible, but there are natives still living who can remember when the grass was a green sward beneath the coconut trees and the valleys almost free from really noxious plants.

Just so there are still no snakes and practically no harmful insects. Unlike Africa or other tropical lands, a man can walk in safety from that sort of thing over the mountain slopes. Or he

would be able to do so if he could walk at all.

In those days, then, the valleys were inhabited. There were mountain villages, there were heathen high places of the old gods, there were roads across the island. The population was then ten times